

LINDA COVIT

Two openwork arcs form the focal point of the memorial. Aligned along the length of the site they curve out towards opposite edges. The passage between them is centered with the roadbed, leading the view towards ocean and sky.

The arcs consist of three layers. The two hundred and sixty-five names of those who perished in Flight 587 are cut out in the two exterior layers, creating a single line of names stretching across both sides of each wall (the height to be decided with the families). A stylized flower and leaf motif¹ is cut out through all three layers above and below each name. The occasional element of a motif is filled with colored glass.

The height of the arcs is scaled to the human body. Their length and the immensely long line of names visually embody the enormity of the loss. Unlike a vertical list of names, the horizontal listing at an accessible height in a single row offers each person visiting the memorial a private moment with the name of their loved one, regardless of the numbers of other people present. From a distance, the different flower motifs identify the countries involved; the large number representing the Dominican Republic reflects the great loss to that community. Close-up, the cutout elements provide places to leave tributes of flowers, letters, poems, etc.

Tall slender tubes are placed in groupings along the outer edges of the site. Installed at differing angles, each is painted in one of three tones of green. Single elements from the flower and leaf motifs are cut out here and there in the upper part of the tubes. A few of the elements are filled with colored glass, projecting beams of colored light across the site.

The rhythmic placement of the tubes creates a flowing movement, evoking a garden/forest. Placed along the edges of the site around the openwork arcs they enclose, creating a sense of quiet privacy. However, the slenderness of the elements and the spacing between them maintain an opening feeling within the site. Their tall height beckons the visitor, affirms the presence of the memorial and keeps it from being overshadowed by the eight-story building and any future development that may occur. Trees intermingle with the tubes, providing shade; low walls encircling the trees offer seating.

A sign is incorporated near the street edge of the site. It provides the legend for the flower symbols with the countries they represent and indicates this memorial joins those in Queens and the Dominican Republic to commemorate the lives of those lost in Flight 587.

There is a tendency for memorials to be stark, sometimes bleak or even oppressive. I chose to conceive the Flight 587 Memorial in a very different spirit: one that commemorates those lost with dignity, celebrates their lives and hopefully offers a peaceful, contemplative and uplifting experience for the families and for the neighborhood.

¹ Seven flower motifs will be used, one for each country affected by the tragedy. The *caoba* flower (*Swietenia mahagoni*) is the national flower of the Dominican Republic and the one used in the sample with this presentation. For each country, it will be decided with the families whether the national flower or another most closely evokes that country for them.